

Backlash 2006: A Shoulder Injury, A Forgotten Classic, And God In A Dance Off (Plus Final Thoughts On WWE PPVs)

Backlash 2006

Date: April 30, 2006

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Attendance: 14,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

I can't believe I just typed that. Since I started these reviews I knew this would be the final PPV I would do for one simple reason: it's the only PPV I've ever attended live. I graduated high school around this time so it was kind of a gift to myself. I went with a friend of mine and sat in the upper deck to watch this show and I'll never forget it. This is actually the first time I've seen the show in full since the night it aired, so this is going to be an interesting experience. We've got Vince/Shane vs. Shawn/God tonight as well as Cena defending against HHH and Edge in the main event. For the last time on an old PPV, let's get to it.

As a rare bonus, I'm throwing in the match from Heat.

Rob Conway vs. Goldust

This was in essence our dark match but it aired on WWE.com as well so it's not a big deal. Conway was doing a Buff Bagwell style gimmick at this point. The announcers waste their time by trying to come up with stupid nicknames. The guys talk some trash before Goldie takes over with some rights. Goldust freaks Conway out with his usual antics and things slow down already. Conway comes back with some basic offense and gets two off a whip into the corner.

A clothesline puts Goldust down and it's off to the chinlock. Yes a

chinlock two minutes into a three and a half minute match. They hit stereo crossbodies to put both guys down for another spot you wouldn't think was needed in a match this short. Conway wins a slugout and hits a swinging neckbreaker for two. He ducks his head off a whip though and Goldie hits that uppercut of his. Goldust starts his comeback and takes him into the corner for ten punches. A powerslam gets the pin for the human Academy Award.

Rating: D. Yeah whatever. No one cared about this but then again it was a match to get the crowd warmed up. Conway tried and was a big deal in OVW so he was kind of a hometown boy but his gimmick killed him. Goldust did his thing which wasn't really intimidating anymore but no one had cared about him for the most part in years. Nothing too bad due to the length but nothing good either.

The opening video is about the two main event matches. Vince and Shane are beating up Shawn because Shawn beat him at Mania and Vince went insane. The title match is a rematch from Mania with Edge thrown in.

I would have been sitting in the upper deck opposite the cameras on the right hand side.

Chris Masters vs. Carlito

These two were partners for awhile but have since had a parting of the ways. Carlito turned on him just after Mania, hitting him with a Backstabber. He would be your face in this match. They slug it out to start with Masters taking over. It's so weird to hear about how the Kentucky Wildcats play in this arena. I would graduate from high school in the same arena in less than a month.

Carlito comes back with right hands but gets backdropped down. The announcers talk about God's in ring debut tonight as Masters gets two. Carlito throws on the Master Lock (you read that right) and Masters bails to the floor, where Carlito hits a good looking dive. Back in and Carlito pounds away in the corner at a very fast pace. No counting in Spanish from the Lexington crowd though so they officially suck.

Masters counters a rana into a buckle bomb and Carlito is in trouble all

of a sudden. Off to a neck crank and Masters breaks up a comeback attempt by Carlito. Masters clotheslines him down and things slow down even more. Here comes the Masterlock but apparently shouting the name of the move you're about to use is a bad idea as Carlito counters into a rollup for two.

A springboard reverse elbow puts Masters down and it's apple time. Carlito throws it to him and dropkicks the knee out to take over even more. Masters never was the smartest guy in the world. Carlito fires off some left armed clotheslines and a dropkick for a delayed two. Masters sends him into the corner but a belly to back superplex is broken up. Carlito "hits" a moonsault press for two. Masters was halfway down before Carlito even touched him. Masterlock is countered by sending Masters' face into the buckle and the Backstabber with feet on the ropes gets the pin.

Rating: D+. This felt like a long Raw match. Carlito wasn't that popular but they were trying with him I guess. It's certainly not bad but it was very dull, which is the exact opposite of what you're looking for in an opener. I didn't really like this one live and it didn't work any better six years later.

Outside shot of Rupp Arena. I live five minutes away.

Maria screws up the result of the previous match and we get some fans' opinions on the winner of the triple threat later. Lita interrupts and makes fun of the Lexington fans. Maria implies Lita is...well that she enjoys men, so Lita threatens her. Tonight after Edge wins, it's a private sex celebration.

Umaga vs. Ric Flair

Umaga debuted less than a month before this so this is his first real match. When you need a new kid tested, call in Naitch. Flair jumps him in the aisle and that goes badly for him. We go into the ring for the bell and Flair gets pounded into the corner. Flair pokes him in the eye and hits him low a few times, only to get chopped right back down.

The running corner attack (NOT FROM RIKISHI YOU NXT ANNOUNCERS) misses

and we go to the floor. Umaga misses a charge and hits the post and it's time to go after the leg. The Figure Four is broken up and Flair is put in the Tree of Woe for a headbutt. The running hip attack sets up another headbutt which sets up the Samoan Spike for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was a total squash for Umaga but the idea here was perfect: Flair made Umaga look like a monster here which is exactly the point of something like this. Umaga would be a destruction machine, not losing until January when Cena finally put him down with a rollup of all things. This was a textbook example of how to put someone over using a legend.

Vince is in the back when Shane comes in for a pep talk. Vince insists it's a tag match and not a handicap match. Also, let him take care of God. There's nothing God can do that Vince can't do. To prove it, he takes Shane's bottle of water and pours it in on the floor. He stomps on it and declares that he's walking on water. Now he takes a well placed loaf of bread and a fish. He throws the fish away and breaks the bread and throws it away. Someone off camera throws a lot of bread at him as well as the fish. It's a "holy mackerel." Shane drinks the water and now it's purple. Get it?

We recap Mickie James vs. Trish for the title. Mickie is a psycho that is obsessed with Trish. She won the title from Trish at Mania using some VERY un-PG actions. Mickie was HOT as the psycho.

Women's Title: Mickie James vs. Trish Stratus

The girl I went to this was a lesbian so this was by far her favorite match of the night. Trish is in skin colored attire trimmed with Kentucky Blue. Nice touch. Actually that's a bit lighter than Kentucky Blue but close enough. Trish grabs a quick rollup for two and blows a kiss. She Ma-Trishes out of a clothesline and fires off forearms. A HARD bicycle kick puts Mickie down and there's a Thesz Press off the apron by Trish. That gets two back in the ring and we get a great upskirt shot of the champ.

Trish pounds away in the corner but gets dumped over the top to the floor, dislocating her shoulder in the process. You can see the bulge in

her back where it's not in place. The referee throws up a quick X and Mickie covers a bit. She chokes away for the DQ after like four minutes.

Rating: N/A. I can't give this a fair grade as the injury derailed it maybe two minutes in. The shoulder injury was SICK live as you could see it out of joint on the big screen and the crash that hurt it was terrible looking. Trish would be out for about two months because of this which is a shame as this was one of the best Divas feuds in years. Also, as someone that has seen these girls up close, cameras do not do them justice. They are stunning in person, as are most of the Divas.

Maria corrects her mistake about Masters earlier and brings in Shawn. He says God is with him as always and he knows it's a handicap match.

Money in the Bank Briefcase/Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Shelton Benjamin

It's winner take all with Rob holding the case and Shelton holding the title. Shelton takes him to the mat to start and rides Van Dam a bit. The fans are completely behind RVD, namely because this is during the opening part of Shelton's heel run. Shelton backflips out of a wristlock to show that he can hang with Rob in all of the high flying stuff. RVD gets his rolling cradle for two and Shelton bails to the corner.

Shelton keeps getting frustrated and heads to the floor for a breather. Back in and Benjamin pounds him down and fires off some forearms. Rob will have none of that and kicks Shelton down. The champ (Shelton) bails to the floor again to avoid Rolling Thunder so Rob dives to the floor to take him out. Shelton runs back in and hits a sunset bomb to the floor to take over again.

Back in and Benjamin works over the back before hooking a chinlock with a knee in the spine. Rob quickly escapes that but gets caught by a knee lift for two. Back to the chinlock which might be a choke. Not that it matters as Rob makes the rope. Rob fights up and tries Rolling Thunder but Shelton catches him in a Samoan Drop in a SWEET counter. They go up and Rob knocks him off the top, but Shelton JUMPS up the corner (not runs the corner. He JUMPED from the mat to the top rope and superplexes Rob down for two.

Off to a kind of rear naked choke which is broken up again. A spin kick takes down Shelton as do some clotheslines. Van Dam kicks him down a few more times and FINALLY hits Rolling Thunder for two. See? Build it up, then pay it off. Not that hard. Split legged moonsault out of the corner gets two. Shelton counters the monkey flip but another spin kick puts him down. Five Star misses and Shelton hits a DDT for two. Actually make that six as it's three two counts, the third having feet on the ropes.

Shelton goes to the floor for no apparent reason. Oh ok he's grabbing the briefcase. Rob goes to the floor after him but gets knocked down quickly. Back in and Shelton hits a top rope cross body which Van Dam rolls through for two. Dragon Whip misses Van Dam and he hits a rana to take Shelton down. Shelton goes for the case and there goes the referee. Rob ducks a shot and hits a van Daminator with the case. Five Star gives Rob the title.

Rating: B. This was a very fun match and the Five Star absolutely has to be seen to be believed. He didn't hold the title long but he would cash in the case in about a month and a half for the WWE Title at One Night Stand. Shelton never got back to the point he was at a year before this, which is a shame as he was on fire at that point. Good match here.

We recap Kane vs. Big Show. They were tag champions until Kane started hearing voices that said May 19. The reason for this would never be explained but it would be the date See No Evil came out, as well as the date that it was revealed that Undertaker lit the fire that killed his parents. It might not have been that but it was something related to it. This would result in a fake Kane in the mask feuding with real Kane without the mask. In short: it was ridiculous.

Big Show says Kane has a movie coming out on May 19th and he needs to get over whatever issues he's got going on. Kane attacked Big Show recently and Show's eye is messed up, so tonight it's an eye for an eye.

Kane vs. Big Show

Kane jumps him before the bell so Show GORILLA PRESSES him. That is SCARY power. Show charges into a boot and Kane goes for the eye. They go to the

floor and as they get back in, Kane sends him into the post to take over. Some choking and a corner clothesline hit Big Show and with a loud whisper of GO DOWN, another clothesline puts Show down. Show slams him down but misses an elbow drop, allowing Kane to work on the arm.

The arm work goes on for awhile with Show on his knees. While in that position, he's up to Kane's shoulder. Kane goes up but jumps into a fallaway slam as Show takes over. A corner charges hits and Kane is in trouble. The chokeslam is countered into what was supposed to be a DDT but was rather an arm on Show's back that he fell down from. A big boot that literally has four inches between itself and Kane's face gets two.

JR is calling it an ugly match which is the code for "we know it sucks too". Powerslam gets two for Show and he goes after the eye. Kane blocks that and kicks Show in the head, sending him out to the floor. And now we bring out the suck, as the arena goes red and Kane's voice fills the arena, talking about May 19. Kane freaks out and has a bit of a fit on the mat. Show is concerned about him so he grabs a chair and blasts Kane in the head with it to knock him out. The match just ends.

Rating: F. There's no other way to put it. The premise was stupid, the match SUCKED with some of the worst looking miscues I've seen this side of a Divas match, and the ending was ridiculous. The live crowd thought the match sucked, but MAN watching this again shows me what this match was: it wasn't just bad. It was REALLY bad. These two can never have a good match together it seems.

Candice Michelle has a chest cold and goes to Vince to heal it because he's God. Vince puts his hand on her chest and prays for her in a parody of a spiritual healer. Candice sounds like she's having an orgasm. This is so stupid I can't comprehend it. The arena hated it too. Shane comes in to take Vince away and he's annoyed.

We recap the "tag" match. Before Mania, Shawn told Vince to get over Montreal so Vince declared war on Shawn. The idea is that Shawn is a Christian but he has to resort to levels he doesn't want to in order beat him, which he did at Wrestlemania. Vince created his own religion: McMahonism. This resulted in some skits in a church which reached new

levels of bad taste. Vince made a "tag" match between himself/Shane vs. Shawn/God. I was really worried about what they were going to do for God here.

Shawn Michaels/God vs. Vince McMahon/Shane McMahon

Vince introduces God and we get a spotlight. His tron video is clouds and he comes out to harp and piano music. Vince stops and criticizes God before challenging him to a dance contest. I kid you not, this is really happening. The spotlights gets in the ring and Vince tells the referee to check him out. Vince makes the match no holds barred because the idea of Vince wrestling an actual match isn't pleasing. Sexy Boy finally hits to end this stupidity.

Vince starts to run his mouth some more and Shawn finally drills him to get going. The daddy goes to the floor while Shawn beats up Shane. Shawn dives on Vince before clotheslining Shane to the floor and hitting a flip dive to take him out. Michaels chops Shane up the ramp but Shane comes back with knees to the stomach. Shane tries to piledrive Shawn off the stage but gets backdropped instead.

Shawn comes back but here's Vince with a chair as they're all on the stage now. Shawn blocks the shot and takes Shane down again before hitting a cross body on Vince off the stage. This looked like nothing live but it looked good on camera. Shawn climbs back up to the stage but gets hit in the face with the chair by Shane. Michaels is busted which I never noticed in the arena.

Shane and Shawn head back to the ring and Shawn goes into the post. Shawn gets sent into the barricade and then back into the ring as Shane is in complete control. The top rope elbow misses and both guys are down. Vince is on the apron now and apparently they have to tag. Shane DDTs Shawn down and it's off to Vince. Vince takes his belt off and whips Shawn's back because he's that evil. Shane throws in a garbage can and Shawn gets his head caved in.

Vince wants a mic and taunts God a bit. God walks out and Vince says come back. Vince declares that God has left the building, but Shawn hasn't. He stands Shawn up and tries a superkick but the kick gets caught. Shawn

makes his comeback and hits the forearm and nip-up. Shane misses a chair shot and caves in Vince's head by mistake. It's a forearm for Shane followed by an atomic drop and some clotheslines. Shawn's top rope elbow hits and both McMahons taste superkicks.

Shawn, ever the genius, doesn't go for a cover but rather goes to the floor for a table. Make that two tables. My fellow Lexingtonians (yes that's what they're called) want ladders because much like other wrestling fans, they're greedy people. Both McMahons are put on tables and here comes the ladder. It's the jumbo sized ladder too. Shawn climbs up but has to dive on the invading Spirit Squad. That was incredible live but the camera didn't get a great shot of it. The main problem was you didn't see them until the dive so Shawn looked crazy.

The numbers catch up with Shawn and he gets beaten down by the five male cheerleaders who are currently tag team champions at this point. They throw Shawn back in and get the McMahons off the tables. The Squad takes Shawn into the ring and hit their finisher on him, which is them all picking him up at once and dropping him through a table. Vince gets the pin. JR calls this BS but the uncensored version.

Rating: D. The match was boring, but JR put it best during the match: this was uncomfortable. On top of that, the whole thing was stupid. This would set up a feud that ran for the whole year which didn't work all that well either. It did lead to the reformation of DX which was pretty interesting, but dang this first part was torture to sit through. Not a horrible match but dang this was a chore to sit through.

The Squad put the McMahons on their shoulders with the man that would become Dolph Ziggler cheering the loudest.

Cena, drawing mostly boos, says that he doesn't have to get pinned tonight so the wins HHH has gotten over him lately don't matter. He's heard everything lately and the fans are divided. The silence is the voice of the people that want Edge to win the title. The cheers are for HHH, but there's one voice that will stand tall at the end. That would be the voice of Lillian Garcia who will declare Cena still WWE Champion. I missed most of this promo the first time as I was watching what was being

set up in the ring.

It's time for Matt Striker's Classroom because we can't fill in a three hour PPV with just Raw matches. Striker says that there's another miracle tonight: there's an intelligent person in Kentucky. He talks about what Kentucky is known for: illegally recruited basketball players and fried chicken. It's not known for its education though, but he's here to remedy that. Striker brings out the best educated person ever from Kentucky: Eugene, who was mentally slow. Literally, that was his character. His music was very catchy though.

Striker calls Eugene proof that you shouldn't marry your sister. Eugene may be the smartest person ever from Kentucky but Striker doesn't think he can even spell his own name. He hands Eugene a piece of chalk and asks him to write it on the chalk board. Eugene writes that Striker enjoys human waste. Striker criticizes the grammar and punctuation, but Eugene is picking his nose. He starts to eat it but Striker stops it. I think you all know what's coming, and there it goes into Striker's mouth. Eugene stuns him too. This would result in a match a few weeks later on Raw which Striker won.

We recap the world title match. Cena beat HHH at Mania to retain but HHH said he wanted another title shot. Edge came out and said he earned the shot by beating Foley in their famous hardcore match. The solution is of course a triple threat match.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. HHH vs. Edge

Cena is defending if that wasn't clear. HHH is the huge crowd favorite. The girl I was with was a huge Cena fan so I was for Edge all night. Well I liked Edge so it wasn't completely because of her. Edge tells the other two to go at it and heads to the floor. That's cool with HHH and Cena as they slug it out, won by the champion. Some shoulders take HHH down and there's the release fisherman's suplex for two. Edge makes the save and bails right back to the floor.

Cena punches the Game some more but walks into the high knee which gets two and some applause. Edge makes another save and heads right back to the floor. HHH and Cena finally have enough of the Canadian and they both

go after him. Cena clotheslines Edge to the floor and takes turns with HHH ramming Edge into the announce table. This is awesome as it turns into a contest to see who can do it harder. Edge goes into the table about 10 times and looks mostly dead.

All three go back in but HHH throws Cena to the floor. Cena pulls HHH off the apron and rams his face into said apron. A top rope splash gets two on Edge and Cena loads up the Shuffle, only for Lita to pull the rope down and send Cena to the floor. HHH rams Cena into the steps and goes back in for a facebuster on Edge. The knee to the face gets two as does the spinebuster.

Edge counters a suplex and hits the Edge-0-Matic for two. HHH shrugs that off and puts on a sleeper but Edge reverses into one of his own. We have a Cena chant as he gets both guys up for the FU at once. That blew my mind at the time and he didn't even hit the move. Edge gets off the top and spears Cena down while HHH is still in the FU position, giving the Game a Samoan Drop from Cena. Cool spot.

HHH and Edge head to the floor and HHH gets catapulted into the post to bust him open. Edge DDTs HHH on the table, leaving blood everywhere when the table doesn't break. That made me cringe in the arena. HHH is COVERED in blood. Back in and Edge dropkicks Cena for two. He spears Cena in the corner but Cena counters the regular one into the STFU. Edge is about to tap but HHH pops up and blocks the hand from coming down and hits Cena in the head with the mic to break the hold.

HHH caves Edge's head in with a chair shot, knocking him into the crowd. He heads back inside and walks right into the STFU just like at Mania. There is blood everywhere. HHH keeps his arm up (there need to be more arm checks from the referees. I miss those) and finally makes the rope. FU is countered into a Pedigree but that's countered back into the STFU. Edge breaks it up and there goes the referee.

Cena tries to FU Edge from the middle rope but HHH gets beneath Cena to make it a modified Tower of Doom. Everyone is down so Lita brings in a chair. She charges at HHH with it but walks into a spinebuster which got a big pop in the arena. HHH gets the chair but throws it down. Instead he

pulls out the sledgehammer but Edge spears him down. Edge gets the hammer but Cena loads him into the FU. HHH breaks that up with a low blow but the Pedigree to Cena is countered into a rollup for the pin to retain.

Rating: B+. This was WAY better from this perspective as I wasn't all that impressed when I saw it live. This was actually an awesome match with a great blade job from HHH and almost non-stop action. Cena getting another win over HHH was another big step in his push towards the top of the company as he wasn't quite there yet. This was a great match and it really impressed me on a second viewing.

HHH blasts them both with the hammer and leaves to King of Kings to end the show. To this day I'm not sure why they went with that ending.

Overall Rating: C+. Leave it to me to go with right in the middle to end things. This show is a strange one as it's barely a B-level show, but there are two very good matches on it, including what you could probably call a forgotten classic of a main event. The problem with the show is that the bad parts are VERY bad and they really bring the show down. That being said, it's still the first and to this point only PPV I've attended live so I have to give it the benefit of the doubt.

That's the end of WWE/F. This has an even longer history of PPVs than the other two companies (combined actually) and maybe it's the fanboy in me, but I say they've done it best. WWF (screw those panda people. I grew up calling it WWF so it's WWF) has mastered the art of putting together a major show. That being said, they often times forget how to do it and I'm sure you can name a ton of entries where they did just that.

On the other hand, they pulled off stuff like Wrestlemania X7 and Summerslam 2002 which put just about any other company's stuff to shame. Over time they've had a ton of shows and therefore they've had a lot more practice to pull them off. The days of the Big Four are long gone and I don't think they're ever going to drop down below one a month again. That being said, it's nowhere near as bad as people make it out to be but that's another topic.

Overall, WWF has had better luck in my eyes on PPV, but they're far from perfect. The Brand Split shows never were that good as they flat out did

not have enough talent on each show to run full three hour PPVs. I'd love to see the In Your House idea come back as a mid level PPV that was only two hours but cost less money. That's just one of a number of possible solutions that could work, but again I'm getting off track. Just like with the other two companies (ECW only had 21 PPVs so I'm omitting them), the WWF has had its ups and downs but when they shows are good, there's nothing better.

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